

Request for Remote Public Input for House Select Committee on COVID-19 Public Comments Report - LINC

Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
03/27/2020 03:02 PM	Education Working Group	Dr. Robert Luebke	<p>Legislators:</p> <p>Coronavirus is upending our North Carolina public schools. On March 23, Gov. Roy Cooper extended the closure of all public schools in North Carolina through May 15 via executive order. That decision raises new challenges and questions: How will children learn? How will the recession impact the schools? Can the public schools integrate distance learning? Will teachers and other staff be paid when schools are closed?</p> <p>These are complicated questions, but not without answers. There are steps that can be taken— both short-term and long-term — to mitigate the impact of coronavirus on the public schools and improve education for all children in North Carolina. Let's review some short-term steps lawmakers could take to provide relief during this crisis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide local districts more flexibility. Lawmakers should give schools flexibility regarding how they provide 185 days of instruction within a nine-month calendar. In addition, districts need flexibility to deal with the impacts of changing the ways education is delivered and a reduction in revenues from an expected recession. Because of school closures, districts should be able to save costs on professional development, substitutes and transportation. The legislature should incentivize districts that take pro-active cost saving measures like protecting reserves, freezing hiring, re-opening contracts, reducing recurring costs and controlling benefit costs. • Maximize choice. Not all districts have access to the same resources or online capabilities. To minimize those inequities, lawmakers should consider taking a percentage of per pupil spending and providing parents with an ESA that they can use to purchase curriculum, books, tutoring or other educational resources to assist with home learning. In addition, several changes to home school law can ease the burden on families who now find themselves homeschooling in difficult circumstances. These include: waiving the requirement to have a nine-month schedule, waiving the requirement for disease immunizations and expanding the definition of a home school to include children of no more than four families or households whose parents determine and deliver the academic instruction. • Continue serving meals to needy students. Public schools do not have a legal option to provide meals when school isn't in session. However, considering the unprecedented circumstances we find ourselves in, school districts that have the resources to do so should continue to serve children eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program through the end of the academic year. Minimal state dollars are involved. However, such examples not only highlight the central role schools play in the life of various communities but also how schools can partner with local community groups or charitable organizations to serve children in need. • Resolve Rural Broadband and Connectivity Issues. Lawmakers should resist the temptation to allow municipalities or private/public partnerships to provide such infrastructure. They haven't worked, plus companies should not compete with government. How do we improve the current situation? Lawmakers should consider

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03/27/2020 09:05 PM	Education Working Group	Mrs Susan Fowler	I am in support of voting by mail ballots in the November election.
03/27/2020 09:32 PM	Education Working Group	May Mitchell	"North Carolina is decades behind other states in making voting as accessible as possible to its residents. And the need for us to overcome our state's deficiency in this essential state operation is only exasperated by the current public health crisis we are facing, the COVID-19 pandemic. There is NO reason that we, North Carolinians, cannot vote by mail. Voting by mail, especially with a return receipt sent to the voter once their vote is received, is very secure, as there are no electronic voting machines that can be hacked. Voting by mail also makes voting more accessible for people who do not have transportation.

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03/28/2020 01:04 PM	Education Working Group	mr abdalla raafat	I want North Carolina to try out vote-by-mail during this November's election. Vote-by-mail is much more convenient and safer from a public health perspective! It's also very secure.
03/28/2020 01:59 PM	Education Working Group	Mr. Michael Lentz	What is being done for those that Medicaid Expansion would have covered, but currently do not have insurance.
03/28/2020 02:02 PM	Education Working Group	Mr. Adam Versenyi	<p>I am asking you to pursue a bold and sustained response to the COVID-19 that makes sure people across the state regardless of who they are, where they work or where they come from are protected in this moment.</p> <p>We need your leadership to drive state level dollars to families and people and ensure our public programs—from education to healthcare to early childhood to social services—have what is needed to respond to this moment and sustain our collective well-being in the future.</p> <p>Please move quickly to fix the state's unemployment insurance, ensure people have access to paid sick leave, and provide the supports to young children and families to put food on the table and a home in which to shelter in place. Your leadership is needed and we know that it will matter so much in this moment that you strengthen our collective institutions. We can afford to do it and cannot afford not to.</p>